

# WHY ON THIS NIGHT DO WE DIP TWICE?

*by Rabbi Moshe Peretz Gilden*

The Pesach (Passover) experience is not simply an annual opportunity to relive our national redemption of 3300 years ago; it is the occasion of reawakening our yearning for the final redemption - the arrival of Mashiach (the Messiah), the ingathering of the exiles and the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Many Pesachs have come and gone and still the redemption has not taken place. The Sages note that the first night of Pesach, the Seder night, always coincides with the day of the week of the Ninth of Av, the day of tragedy throughout Jewish history, including the destruction of both of the prior Jewish Temples. What is the point of this observation? Are our Sages trying to dampen our joyous holiday spirit and fill us with despair as we try to look to the future with hope, or is there some deeper insight into what we are missing that will assist in the accomplishment of this most elusive national aspiration?

In his classic work of the laws of derogatory speech, the Chofetz Chaim (1) discusses the well known truth that the destruction of the Second Temple was due to derogatory speech and the resultant baseless hatred against one another. Because this is the sin that brought about our exile, this sin must be reversed to bring our redemption. Therefore, we need to strengthen ourselves, refrain from gossip and create a state of peace within our nation. It is not enough to hope and yearn for the redemption; it is essential we correct the sins that created the exile.

On the Seder night there are two "dippings": the carpas vegetable into salt water and the bitter herbs of marror into the sweet charoses. The Ben Ish Chai (2) explains that we dip twice because the exile into Egypt took seed with a dipping - Joseph's coat into goat's blood to make it appear as though he had been killed (3) - and the freedom from Egypt began with a dipping - a bundle of hyssop branches into the blood of the Pesach offering, to apply it to the lintel and the two doorposts (4) as a sign to G-d to pass over that home and spare the life of its first born. The two dippings remind us that the exile began as a result of Joseph's derogatory reports against his brothers and the responsive hatred his brothers felt toward him, and that their redemption mandated they take this bundle of hyssop, an allusion to our unity as a nation, and practice humility. Only this would save them from the trap of derogatory speech and baseless hatred.

Thus, concludes Rabbi Matisyahu Salomon (5), our Sages linked Pesach and the Ninth of Av. The redemption for which we yearn and strive on Pesach is directly dependent upon correcting the sins that brought about the destruction of the Temple on the Ninth of Av. Therefore, our Sages established within the Seder night various customs that remind us of this. As we dip the vegetable

into salt water and, later, the marmor into sweet charoses, we need to remember what brought us into our bitter exile in the first place, and what we must do to sweeten our plight and bring us out of this exile. Our yearning for the redemption must be complimented with the commitment to correct the sins that brought the destruction of our Temple and our current exile.

In the merit of our yearning and commitment, may we be redeemed with the coming of the Mashiach speedily in our day.

*Have a Good Shabbos and a Good Yom Tov!*

(1) Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan of Radin; 1838-1933; author of basic works in Jewish law, philosophy and ethics and renowned for his saintly qualities

(2) Chacham Yosef Chaim of Baghdad; 1834-1909; one of the greatest of the modern-day Sephardic poskim, individuals who receive and respond to questions of Jewish Law; his hallmark "Ben Ish Chai" is the compilation of his Shabbos sermons, each of which contains an explanation of the weekly portion using Kabbalistic ideas, followed by halachic discussion of various topics; found in the majority of Sephardic households, it is their classic Jewish legal reference manual

(3) Beraishis/Genesis 37:31

(4) Shemos/Exodus 12:22

(5) Mashgiach Ruchni/Spiritual Mentor of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, New Jersey

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